

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CUREENT STATUS OF BRAZIL-US RELATIONS: AN UPDATING ON THE
EVE OF MRS. CARTER'S VISIT

REFS: (A) BRASILIA 2018 (B) BRASILIA 2090 (C) BRASILIA 2222

1. MOST SERIOUS POINTS OF STRAIN IN US-BRAZIL RELATIONS HAVE EASED
SINCE OUR LAST MAJOR ASSESSMENT (REFTELS),
WHICH WAS MADE DURING PEAK PERIOD OF BILATERAL TENSIONS IN MARCH
STEMMING FROM US EFFORTS TO MODIFY BRAZIL-FRG NUCLEAR ACCORD AND
FROM BRAZIL'S EMOTIONAL REACTION TO US HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT.

2. SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE SINC BEEN AT WORK IN FAVOR OF GREATER
RESTRAINT BY BRAZILIANS. THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-US OUTBURST THAT
BEGAN IN EARLY MARCH ALAMRED NOT ONLY THOSE SECTORS OF OPINION
INSIDE THE REGIME AND OUT WHO HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY FRIENDLY TO US,
BUT ALSO THOSE ELEMENTS THAT ARE NEUTRAL ABOUT US BUT WHO FEAR
OVERT WAVE OF ANTI-ERICANISM WOULD ULTIMATELY PLAY INTO THE
HANDS OF THE REGIME'S ENEMIES. AS THE GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME
INCREASINGLY PREOCCUPIED WITH ITS SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS,
IT HAS CONCOMMITANTLY BECOME MORE RELUCTANT TO CARRY ON
SIMULTANEOUSLY

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AN INTENSE POLITICAL DISPUTE WITH THE US. WE ALSO BELIEVE PROCESS
OF SELF-EDUCATION ABOUT REAL AIRMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NEW
US ADMINISTRATION AND ADAPTATION TO IT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN
GOVERNMENT, WITH RESULTING TENDENCY TO SEE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND
ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR BRAZILIAN INTERESTS MORE OBJECTIVELY.

PRESIDENT'S CORDIAL LETTER TO GEISEL OF MARCH 20 WAS KEY EVENT IN STIMULATING THIS WARMING TREND AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S VISIT EARLIER THIS MONTH FURTHER ENCOURAGED RETURN TOWARD A MORE NORMAL DIALOG. EARLIER NASTINESS ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S -AMATEURISHNESS AND "LACK OF PREPARATION/ HAS RECEDED MARKEDLY AS INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC STATURE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED.

3. BASIC ISSUES CONTRIBUTING TO FRICTIONS (DISCUSSED BELOW) REMAIN WITH US, AS DO THE ATTITUDES OF KEY BRAZILIAN PERSONALITIES IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN THIS RESPECT A MAJOR ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR CONTINUES TO BE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD US FOF FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA, WHICH IS REFLECTED BY SOME OF HIS KEY FOREIGN MINISTRY ADMISERS (THOUGH FREQUENT REPORTS NOW CLAIM THAT SOME OF SILVEIRA'S AND FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AUTHORITY HAS BEEN PRE-EMPTED BY PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL). PRESIDENT GEISEL HIMSELF, DESPITE HIS WARM MARCH 31 REFERENCES TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH US, IS AT BEST NEUTRAL AD NORMALLY WARY ABOUT US, ITS WORLD ROLE AND ITS READINESS TO RECOGNIZE BRAZIL'S PRESENT AND FUTURE IMPORTANCE. WITHIN BRAZILIAN MILITARY WE BELIEVE WE STILL RETAIN STRONG ELEMENTS OF SUPPORT, MANY OF WHOM FELT GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE ACTED WITH EXCESS HAST IN MARCH IN RENOUNCING SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND DENOUNCING 1952 MILITARY AGREEMENT. EVEN SO, SOME WELL PLACED SENIOR OFFICERS, MOST NOTABLY IN BRAZILIAN ARMY, REMAIN RESENTFUL TO US. IN PARTICULAR, HOSTILITY TO US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES IS PRONOUNCED IN MILITARY SECTORS, IN PART BECAUSE OF MILITARY ROLE IN SECURITY APPARATUS. THIS ATTITUDE IS SHARED BY SOME WELL-PLACED AND NATIONALISTIC UPPER MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS, WHO ARE SUSPICIOUS OF US MOTIVES AND INCLINED TO ATTRIBUTE TO US, WITH CONSIDERABLE RESENTMENT, A TUTELARY ROLE.

4. ON MOST PRESSING CURRENT ISSUES, HERE IS HOW WE STAND AT THE
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MOMENT:

A. NUCLEAR ISSUE--BRASZILIANS ARE LESS APPREHENSIVE NOW ON NUCLAEAR ISSUE, IN PART BECUSE OF REASSURING ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS BY FRG SINCE EARLY MARCH, INCLUDING DECISION TO TRANSFER BLUEPRINS FOR SENSITIVE FACILITIES, AND IN PART BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS US WITHDRAWAL FROM ITS PREVIOUS DETERMINATION TO BLOCK TRANSFER OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY, AS INDICATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS IN EUROPE AND THOSE OF OTHER SENIOR US SPOKESMEN. THE BRAZILIAN MOOD, HOWEVER, IS NOT ONE OF TOTAL RELIEF AND CONFIDENCE. THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS AHEAD IN THE CONFLICT WITH THE US, BUT ARE STILL WAITING FOR THE OTHER SHOE TO DROP. THEIR MOOD MIGHT BEST BE DESCRIBED AS WARY OPTIMISM WITH A TENDENCY TO TREAT ALL US INTERNATIONAL NON-PROLIFERATION INITIATIVES WITH CAUTIOUS RESERVE, CIRCUMSPECTION AND DEEP SKEPTICISM.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS--FOLLOWING SURGE OF OFFICIAL EMOTIONALISM IN

EARLY MARCH, WHICH CALMED RATHER QUICKLY, WE HAVE ON BALANCE ENDED UP AHEAD ON THIS ISSUE. GOVERNMENT'S QUICK RENUNCIATION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE IN REACTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, FOLLOWED BY DENUNCIATION OF 1952 MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT, HAS NOW EVEN AT HIGH LEVELS BEEN QUESTIONED AS POSSIBLY PRECIPITATE. GOVERNMENT NEVER REALLY SUCCEEDED IN MOBILIZING GENERAL PUBLIC OPINION IN SUPPORT OF ITS CLAIM THAT US HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT WAS INTERFERENCE OF BRAZILIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ON CONTRARY, EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT ACTION WAS TO DRAMATIZE US CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EVERYWHERE, WHICH IN TURN HAS STRENGTHENED THE POSITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROPONENT

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WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, INTENSIFIED HUMAN RIGHTS AS A RALLYING POINT IN THE CURRENT UPSURGE OF DEMANDS FOR A POLITICAL OPENING, AND GIVEN HEART TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS LOBBY IN THE OPPOSITION, THE CHURCH, THE UNIVERSITIES AND AMONG SOME LIBERAL PROFESSIONS. INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION GIVEN HUMAN RIGHTS HAS ALSO MADE GOVERNMENT EVEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF ITS PURELY DOMESTIC MEASURES, CONCERN WHICH WE SEE AS HAVING DETERRED THE GOVERNMENT FROM TAKING EVEN STRONGER PUNITIVE MEASURES

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AGAINST THE OPPOSITION IN APRIL FOLLOWING THE CONGRESS' REFUSAL TO ENDORSE GOVERNMENT'S JUDICIAL REFORM. AT SAME TIME, BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT IS PROBABLY REASSURED BY WHAT IXVWAYTERPRETS AS SIGNS OF TURN TOWARD GREATER MODERATION AND PRAGMATISM IN THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, AS DISPLAYED IN SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY HIGH LEVEL US OFFICIALS ON NEED FOR BALANCED AND PRACTICAL APPROACH AND IN ADMINISTRATION'S OPPOSITION TO SUCH MEASURES AS HARKINS-BADILLO.

C. TRADE--BRAZILIAN RESENTMENTS IN THE TRADE FIELD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLY EASED BY US DECISIONS ON SHOES AND SUGAR. HOWEVER, CONTINUING FACTOR IN BRAZILIAN UNEASE REMAINS THE PERENNIAL, LATENT CONCERN OVER EVER-PRESENT POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER US PROTECTIONIST MEASURES AGAINST BRAZIL'S EXPORTS.

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